

Christian Liberty.

BY DANIEL MILLER.

"We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us."—Mark 9:38.

The reason here given is, because "he followeth not us." This reasoning is very much in unison with the theology taught by some in the present age. And if the desire to seek the will of the Lord was the motive, the answer that Jesus made,—"Forbid him not,"—would soon settle the mind of the inquirer. The Gospel of Christ is represented to us as the perfect law of liberty. "So speak ye and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty; to set at liberty them that are bruised; where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty; Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience; our liberty which we have in Christ, stand fast therefore in the liberty where-with Christ has made us free; for brethren ye have been called unto liberty; unto the glorious liberty of the children of God; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh; but take heed lest by any means this liberty becomes a stumbling block to them that are weak."

Here we have liberty gloriously set before us in the new dispensation. And the Brethren wherever they held meetings, have succeeded in making friends with Christian people, though belonging to other denominations, by preaching the grand liberty set forth in the Gospel. But let us take heed lest we misuse this liberty. There are said to be good meaning persons that now propose to unite with the Brethren, provided they be accepted with their baptism: being baptized by single immersion. Such would indeed be misusing our liberty. We cannot compromise the ordinances of the Lord Jesus. Our own works we can safely compromise.

If Christian baptism can be accomplished with the single action, then, we are in the wrong, and they in the right; and we should go to them. But that is not how we have learned Christ. The foundation of the Brethren faith is, to believe in the Lord Jesus and obey his commandments and precepts. In the most rigid examination of the Gospel we can come to no other conclusion than that the baptism handed down to us by the Apostles from the Lord, was trine immersion. Not only is this conclusion set forth in the commission, Matt. 28:19, but also confirmed by Eph. 4:5.

The phrase, "one baptism," may weigh somewhat heavy on the minds of these upright people, as bearing them out in their single mode. They must bear in mind, however, that the rendering of word baptism means a completed action, and if three actions was the practice then that was Christ's baptism. If the adjective, one, would indicate the number of actions the rendering would be different. Next, after the evidence set forth by the Apostles, recorded in the new dispensation, comes the fathers, who received the true mode from the Apostles; they being the next most reliable witnesses after the departure of the chosen twelve. They can be the only true witnesses to state what mode was handed to them by the Apostles. And they, all that say anything about it, testify that it was trine immersion up to the time that Eunomius substituted single immersion. And they also tell us when affusion was substituted, but still the plural action was retained. Now with so great a cloud of witnesses, we cannot consistently with our faith, compromise so plain an ordinance, set forth by the only authorities at our hand. We much desire the fellowship and co-operation of these brethren, for so we must call them.

Let us always accept them in a common family as Christians, and that they give this matter an impartial consideration and investigation; for our heart's desire is that they be saved: and with unbounded love towards them, we all the more desire that they accept the ordinances as we received them from the Lord.

Liberty set forth in the gospel dispensation cannot be construed to mean disobedience. It means freedom from dogmas and traditions of uninspired men. It means that we shall put on the easy yoke of Jesus, and not the grievous burdens loaded upon us by those that seek to make themselves our masters. It means freedom to come unto the

Lord Jesus and find rest for our souls, without entering in through a rabbi to tell us orders to observe not found in the Gospel.

Liberty to do right, and firmness to stand to the right, is the motto inscribed on our banner.—Sidney, Ind.

Uzzah's Sin.

Uzzah in a thoughtless moment, probably innocently, or at least ignorantly, yet rashly, if not presumptuously, put forth his hand to save the Ark of God when he thought it was in danger of falling, and we are told that God smote him there for his error. If every over-zealous and even well-disposed watcher of the Ark of God, who jumps forward to steady it in our day when the oxen shake it, were thus smitten of God, there would be a sad thinning out of our pulpits. The minister who, instead of delivering the message of God to sinful man, spends or wastes time and talents in setting himself to prove that there is a God, has much of the spirit and much the same measure of sense as Uzzah. When men think the sneers and ridicule of skepticism and the ignorance of agnosticism place the old Bible in danger, and then precipitately run to the rescue, like Uzzah, they are only seeking to help God against the oxen. If the safety of the ark depended entirely on man, it would have been a total wreck long ago. The best way to silence skepticism, agnosticism, and all other isms with atheistic tendencies, is to preach Christ crucified, and illustrate it with good, old fashioned practical piety.

The Altar on the Prairie.

One day a gentleman was riding on a western prairie, and lost his way. Clouds were in the sky, and not seeing the sun, he quite lost his reckoning. Night came on, and as he knew not which way to guide his horse, he let it take its own way. It was a western horse, and was therefore likely to understand prairie life better than his rider, who was not a western man. By and by a light glimmered in the distance, and it was not long before the faithful animal stopped before a log cabin.

"Who's there?" shouted some one from within. "A benighted traveller," answered the gentleman. "Can you give me a night's lodging?" "You're welcome," said the man appearing at the door.

The gentleman was thankful enough to give up his saddle and bridle to the master of the log cabin. He found the family at supper—man, wife, and children; and a place was soon made for the stranger.

Some time in the evening the man asked, "Are you a minister of the gospel, sir?"

"No," answered the gentleman, and seeing the man disappointed, he asked him why he wished to know.

"Oh, sir," answered the man, "I hoped a minister had come to help me to build a family altar. I had one once, but I lost it coming over the Alleghanies; it was a great loss."

"Perhaps I can help you build one, though I am not a minister," said the gentleman, who always had one himself; and after a little more talk, the man handed him an old family Bible. He read, and they sung a psalm, and all knelt. The gentleman prayed first, and then the man prayed, and the wife and children said, "Amen;" for it seemed as if each wanted to have a little part in building up the family altar.

"Sir," said the man when they arose, "there's many an emigrant that loses his family altar before he gets here—and after, too; sir, it's a great loss."

Yes, many family altars are lost. Some are lost in politics, some in traveling, some in moving, some in the hurry of harvest, some at stores and shops; it is an unspeakable loss. Abraham kept his, yet family never traveled more and moved oftener than his. But wherever he pitched his tent he set up his family altar, and called upon the Lord, and the Lord blessed him. Children as well as parents have an interest in keeping the family altar. Don't let it be lost. If father forgets, let the children gently and respectfully remind him: "Father we have not yet thanked God for his goodness, or prayed to him for forgiveness." No father, I am

sure, but will thank a child for thus helping him in his duties. It is good to sing, and praise and pray around the family altar. "Blest be the tie that binds" a family altar. They are dearer to each other, for being near to God.—PRAIRIE HERALD.

Progressive Christian.

BY THOS E. DAVIS.

"Progressive Christian" is a rich text. "Progressive Christian"—rich, because progress is a chief source of happiness to Christians here, and is to be a large ingredient of their blessedness hereafter: a Hebrew of the Hebrews exclaimed, "I press"—or I progress—"to a mark for a prize."

We shall allege that progress is absolutely essential to true piety; although, we do not affirm that this essential progress is at all times equally discernable and marked, or that it can at any time be measured step by step. To affirm this, would not just suit us isolated migratory spirits. We, like others, prepare our work somewhat to suit our likes and dislikes. Hence, we merely attest that the changes, which the soul is ever undergoing are, in the case of true conversion, on the whole, in one direction, notwithstanding the soul's fluctuations, it rises and still rises, and that this rising must, at some intervals, greater or smaller, become visible. Let no man, therefore, judge his neighbor as a hypocrite, because he thinks he sees a retrograde movement as to some particular, or on some occasion; nor let anyone think his piety is rising when it is evidently sinking. As the soul, before conversion, was in progress, going from one degree of evil to another, strengthening its habits, settling its judgments, fixing its affections, so it may and must be expected to make progress in the new direction. Nay, it cannot be happy without progress, because it cannot exist without some exercise of its powers and affections, and this very exercise gives strength, and this increase of strength is progress.

If the little spark of grace received in conversion was left to itself, or to the feeble breath of mortals to preserve it, we might well suppose that nothing more than its continued existence was intended; but when we find an unbroken current of life-giving air from the breath of the Almighty, brought to play upon that spark, we may conclude with safety, that it was meant to glow and kindle to a flame and that the flame was meant to rise and spread, and to become a conflagration. When we look at the means which are employed for the implanting of religion in the soul, we may judge of these whether it was intended to be stationary. If we found no other means employed but those of ordinary nature, such as human wisdom might devise and human power set in motion, then we might infer that what we have in possession is the whole that God intended to bestow upon us; but could it be to keep alive such piety as you and I possess, without improvement or increase, that God the Father gave his Son to die, and that God the Son assumed our nature, took our place, paid our debt, and bore our chastisement? Such an agent cannot use such means without a purpose. We must go on unto perfection.

Not Alone.

We do not labor alone. However feeble our hands, that might hand is laid on them to direct their movements and to lend strength to their weakness. It is not our speech which will secure results, but His presence with our words, which will bring it about, that even through them a great number shall believe and turn to the Lord. There is our encouragement when we are despondent. There is our rebuke when we are self-confident. There is our stimulus when we are indolent. There is our quietness when we are impatient. If ever we are tempted to think our task heavy, let us not forget that He who sets it helps us to do it, and from his throne shares in all our toils, the Lord still, as of old, working with us. It ever we feel that our strength is nothing, and that we stand solitary against many foes, let us fall upon the peace-giving thought that one man against the world, with Christ to help him, is always in the majority; and let us leave issues of work in his hands, whose hands will guard the seed sown in weakness, whose smile will bless the springing thereof.—A MACLAREN.